

MINUTES ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL

Greenville, NC
May 22, 2006

The Greenville City Council met in a regular meeting on the above date at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers, third floor of the Municipal Building, with Mayor Robert D. Parrott presiding. The meeting was called to order, followed by the invocation by Council Member Pat Dunn and the pledge of allegiance to the flag. The following were present.

Mayor Robert D. Parrott
Mayor Pro-Tem Mildred A. Council
Council Member Ray Craft
Council Member Pat Dunn
Council Member Rose H. Glover
Council Member Chip Little
Council Member Larry Spell
Wayne Bowers, City Manager
Wanda T. Elks, City Clerk
David A. Holec, City Attorney

Mayor Parrott announced that this is the last meeting in this City Hall. The next meeting will be held in the Council Chambers in the new City Hall at 200 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive

Mayor Parrott recognized Boy Scout Troop 30 from Jarvis Memorial Baptist Church and the Troop leaders--John Bennett, Mark Holden, Charles Jenkins and Randy Doub.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Council Member Dunn and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Council to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED 2006-2007 AND 2007-2008 BUDGETS

City Manager Bowers stated that the budget process began with the planning session in January. A preview was given to Council in April, and formal presentations were given to City Council on May 11. He has provided Council with information on three items they requested additional information on through Notes to Council and submitted proposed changes that have been recommended since that meeting.

Based on recent budget discussions, the City of Greenville, in conjunction with Sheppard Memorial Library, has come to an agreement on the amount to be appropriated for the transfer to Sheppard Memorial Library from the City during FY 2007 and 2008. During 2008, the City will adjust its transfer to the Library by an additional \$34,910, from \$994,745 to \$1,029,655. As a result, the unallocated amounts previously recognized by the City will be reduced to \$184,183 to

reflect this change. The Library will appropriate a portion of its fund balance (\$17,361) to offset the costs of implementing additional operating hours in 2007. The recommended transfer to the Library for FY 2007 and 2008 is \$953,735 and \$1,029,655 respectively. If Council agrees to those changes, the revised figures will be \$262,208 undesignated contingency, and the City will need to add \$100,000 that it generally has for \$362,208 and because the base contingency in 2008 it will be \$482,391.

For Greenville Utilities transfer, in April, staff mentioned that there was work to be done between the Utilities and City staff to finalize the figures for the transfer. An additional amount of \$132,752 has been agreed upon, which is a projection based on the audit figures at the end of the year. The two staffs took a conservative approach. Part of that transfer affects the street lights, as street light expenses were adjusted to match revenues. There is a difference of \$29,456 in 2007 and \$668 in 2008, which is a significant revenue item.

Staff was notified by the North Carolina League of Municipalities that they will be providing a service for cities beginning next year determining an actuarial study of the city's liability for certain benefits that are now required. Although the rules are not mandated, cities try to comply in order to get good financial reports and help with bond ratings to comply with standards. If the City offers benefits other than traditional benefits, it has to do actuarial studies to determine the actual benefit. The League, knowing that this will be a requirement, has offered to allow cities to have these actuarial services provided to meet the accounting standards.

City Manager Bowers stated that regarding the workload of the Inspections Division, information had been provided to Council on permits issued, revenues generated, inspections per inspector and historical information on growth and changes in number of building inspectors. It is staff's recommendation that if there is concern about meeting the increased workload, sufficient funds could be added to part-time (\$20,000) and overtime salaries (\$5,000) for flexibility in hiring certified inspectors on a part-time/contractual basis and/or using overtime to cover periods of unusual construction activity.

Comments and questions asked and answers given during the meeting were as follows:

1. What is the turnaround for getting an inspection?
(RESPONSE: With the current staff, the policy is that if a request for an inspection is received in the morning, it is performed that afternoon. If the request is received in the afternoon, it is performed the following morning. With most municipalities, if the request is called in one day, it is performed the next.)
2. Will it be any faster if a person is added?
(RESPONSE: I don't think so.)
3. There are currently seven inspectors in the field. There is a statement in the information that says it takes three to six days to get a permit. There have been times that it takes a week to two weeks to get a building permit. In 1999-2000, there were 10279 permits issued with 8.5 employees. The next year, four people were hired, probably because of the flood. The City fell down on building permits and dropped back on people. There is

a tremendous increase in building permit issuances and no increase in the number of employees. The revenue that is being generated is phenomenal, not counting the ad valorem taxes it is creating. The \$20,000 being requested may not be sufficient.

4. Some of the builders complain that they have to wait for a building permit.
(RESPONSE: The timeframe being complained about is the amount of time it takes to review plans, which includes planning and engineering. Inspections is strictly inspections.)
5. Are the departments being set up properly?
(RESPONSE: When City Hall is renovated, Planning and Inspections will be together. Staff will then be looking at the permitting process to see how it can be streamlined. They have delayed doing that because they don't have the facilities.)
6. To what extent has the number of employees increased since the flood?
(RESPONSE: Staff had to determine moisture, see if it was 50% or more, if it had to be elevated, etc. They had to deal with individuals from the flood. There were also mutual aid inspectors assisting during a portion of the time. With the addition of the \$20,000 for the overtime or part-time and with getting together into City Hall, they will be okay.)
7. What justifies tapping into that money?
(RESPONSE: When staff determines that it can't meet the inspection policy, which would drive them to hire another position. Typically, they would go into overtime first.)
8. Some funds needed to be allocated, and I am willing to give the one-stop shopping a chance. If the inspectors are doing 137 inspections a day, no one can plan. Revenue levels do not need to be jeopardized, so I want to make sure it gets taken care of. Based on the number of inspections and with the inspectors going as hard as they can go five days a week, they have to have time for training and planning, and I'm not sure \$20,000 is enough.
9. I don't think \$20,000 based on the number of inspections going as hard as they can go five days a week, they have to have time for training and planning.
10. The delay may have to be because of where they are physically located. If the plans come in, it takes longer to respond because they may have to be revised and sent back. How many plans come in that have problems that require more time?
(RESPONSE: It could be a building plan or site plan problem. Because of requests received from Council Members Little and Craft a couple of weeks ago, staff looked at the amount of time it took to check plans, and they averaged three to five days from the time they were submitted to the time they were prepared. The plan process includes the Planning Division for site plan review, Engineering for driveway cuts, Greenville Utilities Commission and the Fire/Rescue Department. They all have to sign off before they get a permit. Anything that is a state-owned facility, the City doesn't inspect. They have their own people. However, staff does inspect the hospital and schools.)

11. Do we know how we are going to adequately do the inspections of the heart center?
(RESPONSE: Most schools are not in our jurisdiction.)
12. Other costs include an additional code enforcement officer. The City would have to buy a car, computer, etc. History shows that an inspector has been added each of the last two years.
13. Two code enforcement officers need to be added in the 2007-08 Financial Plan. The City has some good laws; however, some serious help is needed in code enforcement. If it is determined that a year from now, the current number is doing the job, the Council can look at delaying the additional position. Two would be a good start. It is important to send a message that the Council is taking it seriously and has a commitment. Looking two years out, that will be necessary. There is more work than five inspectors, four code enforcement and one public nuisance officer can do.
14. I have been totally disappointed in the services from Neighborhood Services and adding another person is not going to help. One person has already been added. I have talked with people in Neighborhood Services, and nothing has been done. The neighborhoods look like a garbage dump. Staff are being paid to make sure that doesn't happen. Things they looked at last year are still there. Trash cans are out for months at the time. Garbage is running out on the ground. I prefer to see that there is a need there before it is put in the budget. The Director and his staff have gotten the message, made a commitment and stated that it will be different. It is not necessary to add two people until we find there is a need. Neighborhood Services has been moved from place to place. The City Manager is doing some reorganization.
15. Why don't we think in terms of adding one person in 2007 and we will have things behind us? If we don't need it, we don't have to do it?
16. Why does there need to be an additional person? Staff needs to enforce the rules in place, even if that means taking legal action. Staff can write all the letters it wants to and implement all the fines, but until the rules are enforced, nothing is going to change. Money needs to be allocated to follow this through the legal system.
(RESPONSE: The City Attorney is putting more money in the budget. In order to make it work, that amount will be increased. Funds have been budgeted (\$10,000) for expenses associated with collection efforts on the expenses associated with the demolition of homes, boarding up, and nuisance abatement. It is recommended that \$10,000 be included for each of the next few years. Staff is working through the transition. Some changes will be made, such as people will be given time to come into compliance and, if they don't they will get an escalating fine. If that is not handled, the staff will seek an injunction. One of the goals and objectives of the Council is to review fines and recoup the monies.)
17. How long have we not been up to full staff?
(RESPONSE: Neighborhood Services was reassigned to Planning in February, and two staff persons left. The first of April, they were up to three Neighborhood Services

Officers, and staff is in the process of filling one position now. Within two weeks, they should be fully staffed.)

Motion was made by Council Member Spell and seconded by Council Member Glover for \$10,000 to be placed in the FY 2006-07 budget and \$10,000 in the FY 2007-08 Financial Plan for legal fees and to put aside enough money in contingency for FY 2007-08, if needed. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Parrott asked that staff make sure the fees are adequate.

City Manager Bowers stated that he looked at the Council's recommendation for a public information officer. He looked at a part-time video person and what it would cost for a full-time position. He gave the Council two alternates.

1. Provide for one full-time Public Information Officer, a half-time Communications Technician and a full-time Video Technician. This arrangement will enable staff to meet the current proposed plans. Additional remaining Video Technician staff time could be devoted to assisting the Public Information Officer in producing more video-related programming.
2. Provide one full-time Public Information Officer, one half-time Video Technician, and one full-time Communications Technician. This provides for a flexible part-time Video Technician to cover board and commission meetings held in the Council Chambers (up to five per month) and provide some assistance to the Public Information Officer on other video production projects. By converting the existing half-time Communications Technician position to a full-time position, this will permit not only the expansion of the City's communications efforts, but also provide secondary support and back-up to the part-time Video Technician position. If the City Council desires to fund an extra half-time position, this method may be more beneficial because it builds upon the City's long-standing investment in the position. The Communications Technician position has been funded since FY 2001-02.

City Manager Bowers asked if the Council's emphasis is on putting more programs on television or putting on new programs and doing "how-to" videos. A third alternative would be to make them both full-time.

It was suggested that if the Video Technician is made full-time, the City can meet some of the things that need to be accomplished. Staff can do more to educate people on some of the things talked about tonight. They can also promote parks and recreation programs and other services offered by the City. Other people are offering more than Greenville is. With the equipment, the City has made a commitment. The City should capitalize in that area and enhance what is currently being done. An additional video production person would be great. It was favorably discussed at the Citizens Advisory Commission on Cable Television meeting. Other things that were suggested to be done include having more boards and commission meetings televised and doing creative infomercials.

Upon being asked what he preferred, Mr. Steve Hawley, Public Information Officer, stated that it depends on what the goals of Council are. The two goals he heard were increased televising of night meetings and information videos to get the word out about what the City is doing. They got the money from the cable company and have spent a lot to increase the capabilities in the Council Chambers.

Upon being asked if he is talking about communications or video, Mr. Hawley replied that he is talking about a full-time Video Technician. The additional cost to convert the proposed part-time Video Technician into a full-time position is \$23,232 or a total of \$47,232. To convert the existing Communications Technician position into a full-time position would require essentially the same amount of funds. The current FY 2006-07 proposed budget provides for one full-time Public Information Officer, one half-time Communications Technician, and one half-time Video Technician. The part-time Video Technician relates to the City's 2005 goals. Funding the part-time Video Technician positions allows the staff to more fully utilize the City's investment in camera, audio and video equipment by cablecasting more board and commission meetings. In addition, one of the objectives of a goal set by Council in January recommended cablecasting one additional board meeting. If a part-time Video Technician is approved in the FY 2006-07 budget, cablecasting more board and commission meetings is achievable. It is also possible that the same position could assist in the development of informational videos and other video production activities. Two alternatives are suggested:

Upon being asked if he would expect to get a higher quality person by going to full time, Mr. Hawley replied that one expects to get a higher quality person by going to full time. He would not get the quality in a part-time person that is needed.

Motion was made by Council Member Craft and seconded by Council Member Dunn to add \$23,232.07 to the FY 2006-07 budget and \$24,000 to the FY 2007-08 Financial Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Little stated that \$25,000 needs to be added for building inspections. He asked if there is a way, once Planning and Inspections get in the new building, to determine how the process is going to work. He suggested that there may not need to be an additional inspector, but more planning review.

Upon being asked about the mutual aid used in the past, Mr. Tom Tysinger, Director of Public Works, responded that the year immediately following the flood and partially into the next year, the City had mutual aid. Inspectors were here to help administer the \$21 million of federal dollars recovered from the flood. It was for demolition of dilapidated structures, not building inspections.

Concern was expressed about the Chief Building Inspector doing so many inspections, leaving no opportunity for planning, and Mr. Tysinger stated that the Chief Building Inspector averages four to six inspections a day and probably wouldn't be asked to do less. He needs to be in the field. Of all the things mentioned today, relief is needed so inspectors can get the training they need. That is the most important.

Mayor Pro-Tem Council stated that they need to do a little education in the community through the media, the newly arranged program, as well as having community meetings so citizens can buy into it.

Upon being asked what staff was thinking about for contingency, City Manager Bowers replied that for FY 2006-07, \$25,000 is being recommended by Mr. Tysinger for additional help, contractual help and overtime and in FY 2007-08, to continue the \$25,000 but also put \$50,000 in contingency, which would allow for the hiring of an additional inspector in the second year. That would give staff an option. One advantage of the two year budget is that there won't be that much time spent on budget and there will be more time to spend on the new building opening. Staff will be able to use next year's time it is not putting on budget to analyze the flood and come back with a recommendation to carry out what the Council is asking.

Motion was made by Council Member Little and seconded by Council Member Craft to put \$25,000 in the FY 2006-07 budget for additional assistance in inspections and to put \$25,000 in the FY 2007-08 Financial Plan for such assistance and to also put \$50,000 in contingency in FY 2007-08, which would allow for the hiring of an additional inspector in the second year. Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Bowers stated that if Council is agreeable with the adjustment for Sheppard Memorial Library, he would like a motion.

Motion was made by Council Member Dunn and seconded by Council Member Glover to transfer to Sheppard Memorial Library \$953,735 for FY 2006-07 and \$1,029,655 for FY 2007-08. Motion carried unanimously.

Upon being asked what sanitation under Stormwater Management Utility means, Mr. Tysinger responded that is the share of mosquito control program, which is about \$36,000.

Upon being asked why Building and Grounds had a line item they haven't had in the past, Mr. Tysinger responded that division will assist in the storm drainage program. They have the expertise to do that.

Staff was asked if people in the treetops area are charged a drainage fee from Pitt County drainage district.

Mr. Tysinger responded that there are three areas that pay storm drainage fees to drainage district. Historically, when they were in the drainage district that they were previously farmland and it is being charged back to the people in the lots. The drainage district has the responsibility of managing the channels. The City would have to request that they relinquish that. They maintain Fork Swamp.

Upon being asked how many bonds have been issued, City Manager Bowers replied that none have been issued. That will start in October and will be in the \$10 to \$11 million range. Council approved using reserve funds, and that can be done in anticipation of funds. That will be done in 2008.

Upon being asked if it cost more to spread them out, City Manager Bowers stated that if they are not spread out, the City would be paying interest on money it is not using yet. There are federal regulations about arbitrage, and the money has to be used in a certain amount of time. The City has 24 months to use the money once the debt has been issued. The Local Government Commission would not authorize the sale sooner. It is typical to spread it out over four years and to have two projects instead of doing it at once.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Mayor and City Council Members gave comments.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Bowers thanked the staff for a successful budget process. The two-year budget is different than staff is accustomed to, and all departments worked hard to put it together, making it easier to present a balanced budget. The Council provided good guidance during the process, and the issues important to Council were incorporated.

City Manager Bowers stated that the first meeting in the new Council Chambers will be June 5. The swearing-in ceremony for the new Police Chief will be 8:30 in the morning on the same day. At 4:30 in the afternoon on that day, the ribbon cutting for the new building will take place. The program should last no more than ½ hour, and refreshments and tours will be provided from 5:00 until 6:00. Invitations will be mailed for this event to particular individuals; however, all Greenville residents are invited.

ADJOURN

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Council and seconded by Council Member Spell to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda T. Elks, MMC
City Clerk